REMARKS

The Office Action dated February 2, 2004 has been received and carefully studied. Claims 1-96, 99-117 and 131 are in the application and stand rejected. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-96, 99-115, 117 and 131 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,992,752 to Wilz, Sr. The Examiner contends that Wilz discloses the invention identically as recited in the rejected claims. Applicant submits that the claims, as amended, are not anticipated by Wilz.

The Wilz patent discloses a transaction system in which Internet addresses, in the form of either URLs or Domain Name / Path Name are encoded in bar codes distributed to end-users. When a user scans a bar code that encodes an Internet address, the Internet address is passed to a web browser and the web page identified by the encoded address is retrieved. (See, e.g., Wilz, Col. 11, line 13 – Col. 12, line 35.) Wiltz discloses variations of this technique but in all of the disclosed embodiments, the specific Internet address which is to be accessed is encoded in the bar code presented to the user and directly used by the local Internet browser to access that resource. As discussed in the present application, a drawback to this methodology is that web addresses are often subject to change. Thus, for example, if a company developed a new web site or moved to another web address, the products or publications with bar codes having the initial address encoded therein will have incorrect information.

In contrast to the system of Wilz, the present invention provides for a remote translation table which will associate information encoded in bar codes with a desired final destination. Thus, changes to the destination address can be made without effecting the validity of previously distributed bar code data. The pending claims have been amended to more clearly recite this aspect of the invention. Claims 7, 12, 26, and 31 have been canceled and claims 8 and 27 have been amended to be consistent with the amendments to claims 1 and 20.

In particular, claim 1, as amended recites a method including the steps of "maintaining a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto" and "determining source and destination information for the received information" where "the destination information [is] determined from the received information and database entries relating thereto". Claims 7, 12, have been canceled and claim 8 has been amended to be consistent with the amendments to claims 1. Claim 20 similarly recites a portal having a processor that maintains "a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto" and which uses the database to determine "the destination information from the received information and database entries relating thereto." Claims 26, and 31 have been canceled and claim 27 has been amended to be consistent with the amendments to claims 1 and 20.

Because Wilz does not disclose (or suggest) providing a method or system which indirectly associates bar codes with destination addresses as recited in claims 1 and 20, the rejection of these independent claims as being anticipated by Wilz has been traversed and should be withdrawn. The rejection of the dependent claims should likewise be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

Claim 131 recites a method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity. The method includes the steps of providing the bar code to a group of users, connecting each user to the Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader, and permitting the group to collaborate at a web page. There is no teaching or suggestion in Wilz to use bar codes in this manner to allow a group of users to collaborate at a web page. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 131 as being anticipated by Wilz is improper and should be withdrawn.

Claim 116 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Wilz in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,979,762 to Bianco. Bianco discloses a system in which standard and encrypted bar codes can be used. The standard bar codes can be read by a standard bar code reader. However, the encrypted bar codes require a specialized security bar code decoder into which the user, for example, can enter a password to allow the bar code to be decrypted. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to use such a bar code with the system of

Wilz and that the combination would result in the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 116 recites a method for using bar codes having a prefix indicating whether the bar code is encrypted or not and includes the step of "connecting a user to a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader in dependence on whether the bar code is encrypted." There is no teaching or suggestion in either Wilz or Bianco to connect to either the internet or a telephone number depending on whether or not a scanned bar code had a prefix indicating whether or not the code was encrypted. Accordingly the rejection of claim 116 as being obvious over Wilz in view of Bianco is improper and should be withdrawn

Although applicants disagree with the Examiner with respect to the merits of the rejections of the remaining claims, the remaining claims have been canceled in order to focus prosecution on the invention recited in the claims addressed above. Accordingly, the Examiner's objections to claims 39, 46, 52-96 and 132 is moot.

CONCLUSION

Each and every issue raised by the Examiner has been addressed by the above amendments and remarks. Withdrawal of the rejections and reconsideration is respectfully requested. Should the examiner believe that it would advance the progress of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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